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SENSITIVE
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TAGS: [ECPS](#) [EINV](#) [BTIO](#) [QA](#)

SUBJECT: CONSORTIUM TELEPHONE LICENSE WIN ENDS LOCAL
FIXED-LINE MONOPOLY

REF: 2007 DOHA 1174

¶1. (SBU) U.K.-based Vodafone and its local partner, the Qatar Foundation (QF), won Qatar's second fixed-line telephone license September 15, ending government monopoly Qtel's monopoly of the sector. The same Vodafone-QF consortium was awarded Qatar's second mobile license in December 2007 (see reftel). Local telecommunications regulator ictQatar did not reveal how much the consortium paid for either license. Both services are expected to begin in 2009 (mobile service on or before March 1).

¶2. (SBU) Comment: QF is a semi-governmental non-profit organization run by the Amir's wife. Its role in the winning consortium for both the mobile and fixed telephone licenses casts doubt on the government's stated goal of liberalizing the telecommunications sector.

LeBaron